28: Spiro--75
116, 788, 241, 342, 396

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Woleaians-1-2
Ifalik

"It is of note that Malinowski's observation that ritual is used in those areas of life in which the degree of control and predictability is slight, is borne out on Ifaluk. There is no garden ritual of any kind that I could discover. The taro grows regularly, only weeding and transplanting with fertilization being required. There has never been a crop failure, or drowth or any other unforeseen contingency that has effected the supply. Breadfruit and coconuts grow without any tending. Thus in these matters there is no ritual. There are a number of taboos, the violation of which will adversely effect the food supply, but that is a different matter.

But in hazardous undertakings, such as house construction, in which there is the chance of men being crushed to death; or ocean voyages, in which storms may sink the canoe or drive it off its course; or canoe construction, in which a faulty job will endanger lives, ritual is used. Not only are the io-io offered, but there are other rituals performed as well. After the canoe is completed and before it is painted it is sailed inside the lagoon to find out whether and where it may leak or may be faulty otherwise. When it is brought back on land, one of the carpenters sits astride the canoe and recites certain set formulae while waving a coconut branch over it. Unfortunately I did not record the texts but

it asks that the canoe be speedy, that it not drift away when on a journey, and that it not be shattered. (30)"

"30. This ritual is known as the gavaiven. I chanced to see Taroman performing the ritual, and I asked Tom what it was. He became quite sheepish, and said, 'I don't know, another place, another color', which means for reasons, I have never been able to understand, that every society has its own customs, which is a charming way of stating the position of cultural relativism. He proceeded to describe a ship-christening he had witnessed in Manilla, which was, to his way of thinking, the western analogue to the Ifaluk custom."